

# It's a seamless revolution: Adidas follows Nike Flyknit with Primeknit

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Adidas AG on Thursday debuted the Adizero Primeknit, a one-piece, seamless running shoe similar to Nike Inc.'s Flyknit footwear technology it showcased in February.

[Nike Inc.](#) in February won praise from sneakerheads and analysts for the development of Flyknit, a lightweight running shoe knit together without seams.

It was hailed as [a revolutionary advancement in manufacturing techniques](#), a prime example of [developing sustainable products](#) and something Nike hopes becomes the building block for a new generation of technical footwear products.

Turns out its arch-rival Adidas AG wasn't far behind.

The German brand, which keeps its North American headquarters in Portland, on Thursday debuted the Adizero Primeknit, its own seamless, one piece running shoe, that — in both the printed description and product images — appears remarkably similar to Nike's Flyknit.

The shoe, designed at the brand's Herzogenaurach headquarters, was described without irony as being "a first-of-its-kind running shoe."

This is certain to open up a new debate as to who came up with the idea first. [James Carnes](#), head of sport performance design at Adidas, said in a news release that Primeknit has been three years in the making.

"In designing the adizero Primeknit, our goal was to completely rethink how footwear is engineered, with a keen eye on sustainable construction," Carnes said in a news release. "This revolutionary design will forever change the way we engineer shoes, combining both premium innovation and maximum performance benefits."

Nike CEO [Mark Parker](#) made similar statements to analysts back in March when he discussed how Flyknit, by using less material than traditionally made shoes, will improve the company's profit margin as it's scaled up.

"Flyknit has the potential to change everything," Parker [said at the time](#). "We're at the very front end of the potential here."

For what it's worth, there's a market-based reason for the jump into seamless, one-piece running technology.

[Matt Powell](#), a footwear industry analyst with SportsOneSource, said that while the products will undoubtedly be expensive at first, it could eventually become as big — at least in Nike terms — as the Nike Free running technology. Through June Nike Free sales had totaled more than \$650 million, according to Powell's figures.

"I believe this initial wave of knitted construction shoes isn't just a trend, but an absolute industry game changer. Athletic footwear manufacturing hasn't really changed much in the last half century. Until Nike unveiled Flyknit," said [John Brilliant](#), editor of the sneaker-focused Web site Counterkicks.com. "The technology behind these knitted shoes succinctly connects together so many varying areas of the shoe business together that whether the consumer likes it initially or not — and by all initial accounts of Nike Flyknit response, they do — this really is an opening salvo look at how the future of shoes will be constructed."

Adidas' debut Primeknit is timed for the London Olympics, which Carnes called the "biggest stage in the world for sports innovation."

The company created 2,012 individually numbered pairs of Adizero Primeknit shoes knitted in identical red-and-white color patterns for Adidas that will be available for sale starting Friday from a temporary store in London. Additional colors will be released this fall.

Erik Siemers covers footwear and apparel, technology, energy, manufacturing and ports.